

011586.6-15
MONTBLANC:

AN IRREGULAR

LYRIC POEM:

BY THE

REV^D. THOMAS SEDGWICK WHALLEY,

AUTHOR OF EDWY AND EDILDA;—A POEM

ON MRS. SIDDONS; &c. &c.

PRINTED BY R. CRUTTWELL,

FOR J. MARSHALL, MILSOM-STREET, BATH;

AND SOLD BY

R. BALDWIN, PATER-NOSTER-RROW; T. BECKET, PALL-MALL; AND

T. HOOKHAM, NEW-BOND-STREET, LONDON.

M DCC LXXXVIII.

MONT BLANC

AN IRREGULAR



LYRIC OF THE



M O N T B L A N C.

I.

WONDER of earth!* sublimest 'midst sublime!

August MONT BLANC! who shall thy praises sing?

What harp, though strung like that of Israel's king,

To sooth or rouse the soul with numbers sweet,

What song, though breathing all the pow'rs of rhyme,

To celebrate thy glory shall be meet?

* MONT BLANC, according to the most accurate measurements and calculations, is the highest mountain (taken from its base) in the known world; and its bulk and majesty are in proportion to its height. Measured from the common level of the sea, two of the Peruvian mountains are somewhat loftier; but, in apparent eminence, Mont Blanc rises near 3000 feet above them.

B

Yet

Yet shall OLYMPUS' praise be sung
In potent verse? Shall IDA's name
Dazzle with immortal fame?

Shall horrid ÆTNA's majesty be rung
With sounds as lofty as his murd'rous flame,
And greatest thou the works of GOD among,
Shall not thy wonders wake one lyre,
Round thy triumphant head no bays be hung,
Nor thy superior theme superior lays inspire?

II.

Shall I trust the thoughts that rise
And struggle in *my* panting breast,
Tinted with a thousand dyes,
Image quick on image prest?
Shall they dare, *my* trembling lays,
Lift their notes in feeble praise,
To sing a theme might well inspire
An HOMER's force, a PINDAR's fire?



Avaunt! avaunt! each coward fear;

I feel the swelling raptures roll

In surging tides upon my soul;

Celestial promptings strike my ear!

Reach then, reach my sounding lyre;

My panting soul is all on fire:

Swift the silver strings accord;

My eager hand,

Thy skill command;

A mighty strain be pour'd!

O! for a strain so potent to impart

The great sensations struggling in my heart!

Let but the high enthusiasms roll

Warm from my hand, as active in my soul;

Let the loud thunders of my voice declare

The vivid lightning's flashing there!

Then strong shall be the flood of rhyme,

And all be full, and all sublime.

Seize! seize! the glowing images that pass
 Like transient shadows o'er the mimic glass!
 Let not their fervors faint and die!
 It is the hour of extacy.
 All, *all* the Muse upon me breaks!
 I hear, I know her voice, and thus she speaks:—

III.

See with what grandeur to the skies
 The monarch Mountain lifts his brow;
 While crowding round the vale below,
 His vassal ALPS in tow'ring order rise,*
 And, watchful of his regal nod,
 His mighty pleasure seem to wait,
 As 'twere the mandate of a God!
 Sublime in his imperial state,

* It is remarkable that all the mountains subordinate to MONT BLANC, and which form parts of the immense chain that extends from this their *monarch*, in every direction, incline their heads *towards*, as if to pay him homage; and gradually decrease in height as they are farther removed from him as their common centre.

From 'midst the splendors of his throne,
 He looks with sovereign favour down,
 Smiles their prompt service to approve,
 Awaits their homage, and accepts their love,
 Then binding round his regal brows
 The glories of his cloudy crown,
 Fleece upon fleece together roll'd,
 And fold within refulgent fold,
 Like a celestial turban, bright
 With purple, gold, and lustrous light,
 He communes with the source of day,
 As king with king; nor terror knows,
 Left the pure silver of his massive snows
 Shou'd melt beneath the fervent solar ray.

IV.

But hush! for slum'bring in his secret bed,
 His cloudy curtains drawn about his head,

The

The glories of his face he hides,
 While, thronging round his lofty sides,
 The mingled vapours wanton play;
 Now fringe each rock with feathers bright,
 Now dark descend, now mounting light,
 Drink brilliance from the fount of Day.
 Cease your sport! the monarch wakes,
 His temples, like a giant, shakes;
 And lo! the clouds on either side
 From round his ample front divide,
 Roll back their hosts, and clustring stand,
 Obedient to his high command:
 Again his snowy honours play,
 Resplendent in the eye of day;
 Again, with majesty serene,
 He lifts his head above the scene;
 And wood and mountain, hill and vale,
 In common concert, lift their voice

To

To bid his great uprising hail!
And in his guardian eye rejoice.

V.

Ah! whence the change; great ruler! why
That gloomy front, that threat'ning eye?
What our offence?—Be still, be still,
Nor question, bold, his sov'reign will.
Stand, stand aloof! do ye not dread
The storms that gather round his head?
His rising wrath do ye not fear?
Hark! the hollow blasts I hear
Murmur fullen round his brow:
Louder and louder yet they grow,
The rush of Tempest strikes my ear!
The clouds their gloomy squadrons roll,
Their fierce contention daunts the soul,
And furious winds, in silence, wait
The issue of the dire debate.

Did ye not hear the eagle's wail?
 He dares not rest upon his rock,
 But plunges headlong to the vale,
 Scar'd at the elemental flock;
 There, nestled close, he trembling lies,
 Mournful stoops his haughty crest,
 Hangs his dread beak upon his breast,
 And droops his daring wing, and shuts his piercing eyes.

VI.

Fly! fly! the tempest howls aloud!
 Around the angry mountain's head
 The universal horrors spread,
 And wrap all nature in an awful shroud.
 It bursts! See raging from on high
 How thunderbolts he launches round!
 How! dreadful to the shrinking eye
 The fires run swiftly o'er the ground!

While

While vassal mountains, proud to bear
 Part in the elemental war,
 Rife dark, and on their haughty heads
 Shake to the winds the lofty shades
 Of many forests; scowling stand,
 In battled ranks, on either hand;
 With uproar wild, new thunders roll,
 New lightnings dart from pole to pole,
 Howl from their cliffs, and, indistinct, deform,
 Swell with new terrors thro' the veiling storm.

VII.

Heaven! what a crash!—The pealing found
 Of thunders in the louder roar is drown'd!
 Ah! 'tis the shock of Avalanches* hurl'd
 In swift destruction to the nether world.

* The Avalanche is an enormous mass of snow detached from the Alpian summits either by its own weight, by violent heats, or the shock of tempests: it too often destroys every thing in its dreadful course, and buries, in a moment, whole fields and villages. The only protection

Spare us! mighty mountain, spare!
 Appalling horrors freeze our souls!
 Vain, alas! the humble prayer;
 The widely wafting mischief rolls,
 Bellowing in its furious course:
 The winged vengeance who shall stay?
 See, with what resistless force,
 Rushing down the mountain's side,
 The stately woods it sweeps away,
 (For centuries their grace and pride)
 And pastures, shepherds, flocks, a countless host!
 Crush'd, torn, o'erwhelm'd, are in one ruin lost!
 While still, by breaks, fierce glares of angry light,
 In partial view,
 The desolation shew,
 And, dread! illumine the depth of deeper gloom than night!

against its fury are the vast and ancient forests of pines, which cloath the sides of the lower Alps;
 but if these are borne down by its impetuous force, nothing can resist it in its descent to the vale.

VIII. So

VIII.

So once, round SINAI's sacred brow,
 Thick clouds their awful cov'ring spread,
 To screen weak man's imperfect sight
 From heav'n's intolerable light,
 And veil the great Creator's head:
 Yet still, by fits, a baleful beam
 Wou'd through surrounding darkness gleam;
 And now the rush of winds was heard,
 And now devouring fires appear'd,
 And bickering sparks, and ruddy flame,
 Bursting with thunders thro' the smoke,
 Which, as they burn'd from pole to pole,
 The Godhead's waken'd vengeance spoke,
 Harrow'd rebellious Israel's foul,

And shew'd the Almighty arm from whence they came.

IX.

Touch a sweet, a chearful strain,
 The strain of rising joy and peace;
 Hope, at last, revives again,
 All the mountain horrors cease.*
 See the vast, the varied mound
 Of tributary Alps around,
 In shadowy majesty arise
 Dimly thro' their misty shrouds;
 In gather'd troops the fleeting clouds
 Shew a glimpse of clearer skies :
 Round their king's triumphant brow
 No longer midnight darkness lours,
 While his ample chest below,
 Shining through the crystal show'rs,

* The changes from calm to storm, and from terrific to serene majesty, are wonderfully rapid amongst the Alps, as the author witnessed on various occasions.

Like a vast Behemoth, again
 He heaves above the wat'ry plain:
 Now the sun-beams, glancing bright
 Thro' scatt'ring mists, with partial light
 Gild the rocks, the hills, the woods;
 Now thro' the verdant vale he plays
 With gladd'ning warmth, now darts his rays
 With brilliance on the headlong floods.
 Whence those splendors? On the fight
 Why breaks that dazzling flood of light?
 A thousand tow'rs of stately mould,
 A thousand obelisks arise,
 Tinted with azure, purple, gold,
 And pour their glories on the eyes.*
 What means that bright tempestuous tide
 Which tow'rs behind with giant waves,

* The Glaciers of the famous valley of Chamouny, and which owe their origin and supply to Mont Blanc, if viewed partially, offer to the eye these and many other figures, which, illumined by the sun-beams, sparkle with astonishing splendor.

And

And swelling with enormous pride,
 The cloud-capt rocks and summits laves? *
 Yet check'd by some all-powerful hand,
 While rushing to destruction round,
 In iron fetters seems to stand
 Irrevocably bound!
 Thy GLACIERS these, O mighty king!
 And hallow'd be their monstrous birth,
 Since from their frozen bosoms spring
 The rivers that refresh the earth,
 And the rich tide of various commerce pour
 To many a near, and many a distant shore.

X.

All nature from her dire dismay
 Rises to life and light once more,

* Whoever has read BOURRIT's descriptions of the Glaciers, will not think this of the author exaggerated.

While,

While, glittering to the lamp of day,
 New glories from the mountain pour,
 As high he lifts his regal brows,
 Array'd in all their pomp of snows.
 About his cliffs, on either hand,
 As tokens of his vengeance past,
 See the bright clouds, his weapons, hung,
 Or folded round his ample waist,
 Or light dispers'd his snows among.
 Creatures of his supreme command,
 See them in shining phalanx stand
 On every subject mountain's height,
 Gather in gorgeous clusters here,
 In separate fleeces there appear,
 Wreathing the rocks with garlands bright,
 Rich with warm tints of varying light.
 Yet, midst their painted shews, and specious rest,
 Hiding dark storms within their hollow breast,

And

And ready at their Ruler's word to wear,
As now, the smiles of peace, so then, the frowns of war.

XI.

So when the sons of Israel fled,
Conducted by their Maker's hand,
In cloudy state above their head
He issued out his high command,
Or in a pillar of bright flame by night,
Cheer'd their dejected souls, and charm'd their wond'ring sight.
In bold contempt of Israel's God,
Egypt pursues the chosen class,
When, lo! obedient to his nod,
The sea divides to let them pass,
The foaming waves on either side,
With baffled rage and vanquish'd pride,
Roll'd backward in a mighty mass;
But swift upon her host of foes
Rush'd back the roaring tide :

While from the night of clouds between,
 Th' avenging GOD is thund'ring seen,
 Till o'er their haughty heads the whelming billows close.
 Then calm'd his wrath, a new celestial ray
 The fainting sons of Israel cheers,
 Confirms their hopes, dispels their fears,
 Illumes their path, and leads them on their way;
 Yet warns them 'midst its splendor to revere
 The Godhead, and his wakened vengeance fear.

XII.

Heard ye not the rushing sound
 Of mighty wings? Exulting cries,
 From yonder dell, did ye not hear?
 See! spurning haughtily the ground,
 Disdainful of his former fear,
 The royal bird, of matchless force,
 Shoots upward to his native skies.

D

While

While round the cliffs his wheeling course
 Sublime he bends, the Chamois flies,
 With wild affright, o'er wastes of snow,
 And as he darts from rock to rock,
 Far swifter than the bounding roe,
 Seems to behold the ardent eyes
 And rending talons of his dreadful foe,
 And feel the furling wings' resistless shock
 Plunge him, at once, deep to the gulph below.*
 But careless of his wonted prey,
 Th' ambitious bird now soars his way
 To seek the burning lamp of day;

* The *Læmyr Geyer* (so called by the natives) is an eagle peculiar to the Alps, and far exceeding in size and strength any other in Europe, if not in the world. It generally measures 16 feet from the tip of one extended wing to that of the other, and its whole plumage is yellow, except two or three ringlets of white round the neck. Its favourite prey is the Chamois, a kind of swift and strong goat, which is also a native of the Alps, and which the rapacious bird worries and pursues from rock to rock, till arrived at its last refuge, the desperate animal makes head, and endeavours to defend itself, but is soon precipitated by one stroke of its inveterate enemy's powerful wing to the deep gulph below, whither the *Læmyr Geyer* follows, and preys on its mangled body.

Till

Till, spent with toil, his pinions rest
 Upon the shining cask of snows
 That clads the mountain's regal brows:
 Nor scornest thou th' imperial crest,
 For is it not thy chosen bird,
 Thy Læmyr Geyer, thy eagle strong,
 To all the feather'd race preferr'd,
 That sail, or nest, thy crags among?
 And is there one like him can dare
 Such prowess in the fields of air?
 Son of thy lordly Alps, and them alone,
 And proud of his exalted birth,
 He scorns the humbler realms of earth,
 Nor bears a rival near his rocky throne.
 Triumphant on thy head he stands,
 The volume of his wings expands,
 That glitter like the burnish'd gold,
 And swells his chest, and stretches bold

His wreathed neck, and turns on high
 The orbit of his radiant eye
 To drink new fires from the fount of light,
 On whose intolerable blaze,
 With raptur'd steadfastness to gaze,
 Harmless endures alone his daring sight.

XIII.

Hail! scenes august, and ever new,
 Which still the eager eyes pursue
 With awe and rapture: Gently hail!
 Ye milder graces of the vale,
 That wanton 'midst the mighty mound
 Of Glaciers, rocks, and mountains round.
 Hail! ye majestic domes,* all hail!
 Whose triple honours stately rise,

* The summit of Mont Blanc is broken into three distinct heads, in the form of domes, the highest of which inclines towards Italy, and the others towards France, &c.

And

And with your dazzling snows assail
 The pure empyreal of the skies;
 Not things of earth, or earthly mould,
 Ye seem, as from the clouds among,
 About yout granite columns hung,
 Ye burst; and, tinted warm with gold,
 Pour'd from the brilliant gates of morn,
 The heavenly cope, sublimely spread
 In azure state above your head
 Contrast, irradiate, and adorn!
 Hail! matchless pyramids, that stand
 Aloft amidst the realms of air;
 And from your cloud-capt heights deride
 The pigmy piles of Egypt's land,
 Her swarthy monarch's work and pride:
 The leaders ye whose guardian care
 Extends o'er every humbler band

Of

Of mountains round. The lordly DRU,*
 From his broad base here tow'rs on high,
 And there the aching eyes pursue
 The loftier CHARMOS to the sky;
 With wonder, o'er his dusky head
 See mounds of ice their lustre shed,
 And slender pinnacles among
 His solid ribs so lightly hung,
 That every summer breeze that wakes
 Their delicate position shakes;
 Yet wint'ry winds, and beating rain,
 And all the tempest's furious shock,
 Age after age, have striv'n in vain
 To rend them from their parent rock.

* This, and the following, are the names of the picturesque and sublime rocks that surround the Glacier of Montanvert, and which (after Mont Blanc) are amongst the highest of the Alpien summits.

Needle of South,* a pilot thou
 More chearful 'midst the wilds of snow;
 For still thy Argus' eye is seen
 Wide open to the blue serene;
 Nor shall a Mercury be found,
 Through heaven's immeasurable round,
 Or Morpheus, who has power to close
 Thy watchful eyelids in repose.
 With haughtier mien and broader chest,
 Great JORASSE frowns above the rest,
 And seems to view with high disdain
 His fellows in the vassal chain.
 A mighty bulwark tow'rs between,
 To close the vast tremendous scene;
 From whence unnumber'd spires arise
 With Gothic grandeur to the skies,

* So called from being pierced near the point with an aperture, through which the sky is plainly seen from the glacier beneath.

Of heav'nly masonry, that far
 Surpass what human skill can dare;
 And laugh to scorn the narrow rules
 Of all the geometric schools.
 High o'er the rest, with conscious state,
 The GIANT'S Tow'R appears elate,
 Who, in his peerless fortrefs, stores
 The monarch's thunderbolt, and pours,
 Prompt to fulfil
 His sov'reign will,
 The giddy whirlwind from his brow,
 To desolate the world below.
 But vain the hope, the labour vain,
 To count the tributary host
 Of mountains, that surround thy plain
 Oh! CHAMOUNY; in transport lost
 The eye pursues their glorious chain,
 Here dark with shade, there bright with snows,
 Here bleak and bare, with barren brows,

And there, with fruitful graces hung,
 And flocks and herds their fields among,
 Their verdant fields, whose velvet pours,
 From its enamell'd lap, the stores
 Of many a soft and rich perfume,
 Brush'd by the viewless pinions light,
 Of zephyrs, in their wanton flight,
 From the inimitable bloom
 Of flow'rs, which far less vivid glow,
 Less fragrant, in the vales below.*

XIV.

When night assumes her awful reign,
 And solemn shades obscure the plain,

* It is remarked by Naturalists, that the Alpien flowers are of more glowing hues, and more exquisite odour, than those of a similar kind in the vales beneath; and I can assert it from my own experience. The rarity of the air, as well from its effect on their properties as our senses, may, perhaps, account for this.

E

How

How graceful then thy domes arise,
 Imperial mountain! to the skies,
 And their eternal vigils keep
 Over the silent realms of sleep!
 All hush'd about thy throne sublime,
 Save the soft-treading foot of time,
 Beneath whose endless pressure, fall
 The noblest cities' tow'ry pride,
 The hills, the mountains, rocks, and all
 That art or nature e'er supplied;
 All, all, but thee; for still thy state
 Defies the tyrant's envious hate,
 And still thy regal pomp appears
 Unblemish'd by the weight of years,
 Since change and fickle chance are seen
 Heaping new honours on thy snows,
 And countless ages sit serene,
 Amidst the splendor of thy brows.

She

She breaks! How sweet her trembling light
 Silvers the sable stole of night?
 Oh! LUNA, let thy fairest face
 The mountain's gloomy grandeur grace!
 Ride onwards, while from either side
 Thy bright'ning path the clouds divide,
 And pausing full upon his brow,
 Suffuse thy lustre o'er his snow!
 Gild the dark fleeces curling hung,
 About his breast, his domes among,
 And beam o'er all his rocks below!
 His rocks sublime, whose varied gold*
 Has borne on high, for years untold,

* The reflection of the moon-beams upon the granite rocks that support the immense volume of snow on Mont Blanc, gives them a golden hue, which, contrasted with the pure white above, is surprisingly beautiful. I was so fortunate as to see Mont Blanc by the light of the full moon, breaking through dark clouds, and was never struck with so deep an awe, nor ever felt such sweet and solemn enthusiasms awakened in my bosom.

The massy silyer of his pond'rous throne,
 And stood unmov'd, and still shall stand,
 Through many a wreck of many a land,
 Marking a thousand scenes to mortal eyes unknown.

XV.

Aloft, beneath thy shelt'ring brow,
 Shelt'ring from the beams of day,
 Which vainly on his horrors play,
 And 'midst the deluge of his snow
 Stern Winter sits, with surly pride,
 Upon his high and rugged throne,
 Which frozen pillars firm support,
 Bitter blasts, from ev'ry fide,
 Howl around his gloomy court,
 And his relentless empire own:
 Driving fleet and cutting airs
 Stiffen in his grizzly hairs,

Which

Which, like the comet's angry beam,
 O'er the wild waste portentous stream:
 Fierce in his red and haggard eye,
 Rude Violence, destructive Rage,
 And tyrant Cruelty, appear;
 While in his frowning forehead lie
 At once the furrows deep of age,
 And thirst of havock, spoil, and war.
 Above, below, and all around,
 Glares a dread, a dreary scene,
 In icy chains eternal bound,
 With horrid gulphs that yawn between,*
 A fearful depth! While, far and near,
 The marks of ruin vast appear;
 Marks of his direful controul,
 And suited to delight his soul.

* The Glaciers are throughout intersected by innumerable clefts, threatening, at almost every step, to swallow you up alive. Many of them are several hundred feet deep.

An icy robe the giant wears;
 The tempest arms his feeble hand;
 His right, an iron sceptre bears,
 Emblem of his austere command,
 With which, resistless in his force,
 He urges the tremendous course
 Of mighty Glaciers, to assail
 The blooming graces of the vale,
 With summer sporting, blythe, beneath,
 And deck'd with many a fragrant wreath.
 Nor cou'd the light and lovely band
 Long his obdurate pow'r withstand,
 Did not the monarch mountain's will
 Bid his devouring wrath be still;*

* The figure, though bold here, will, it is hoped, be thought defensible, as Mont Blanc is the source and support of the Glaciers of Montanvert and Bossons, which run quite down to the valley of Chamouny, and encroach on or recede from it in proportion to the impelling force from the monarch mountain; the concentered rays of the sun in the valley, after a hotter summer, and after a milder winter than common, diminishing their volume and extent, and vice versa.

And

And from the terrors of his throne
 Dispatch, in pealing thunders, down
 Mandates he must not disobey:
 Saying, " Thus far thy rage has way,
 " But let it not, presumptuous, dare
 " Invade, with undistinguish'd war,
 " What I protect, and what I doom
 " The victim of thy icy tomb,
 " And subject to thy ruthless sway!"
 Banning, yet aw'd at thy command,
 He, howling, stays his savage hand,
 And views around him, with despair,
 Fresh flow'rs of summer,* 'broider, fair,

The

* It is equally interesting and astonishing to behold the greatest fertility, and most desolate barrenness, touch each other in the famous valley of Chamouny, where the ripe harvest waves its golden graces at the very edge of the Glaciers; and flowers of all tints and odours spring up as it were by magic, the instant, and even before their covering of snows entirely disappear. Near the summit of one of the Alps in Savoy, I lay voluptuously down on a vast carpet embroidered thick with a thousand various flowers, from whose glowing blossoms my body pressed the most delicious perfumes,

The thinner drapery of his snow;
While fruitful autumn's floating gold,
His frozen mantle's utmost fold,
Borders with deep and gorgeous fringe below.

XVI.

What foot shall fully with its tread
The spotless honours of thy head? *
What sacrilegious eye profane
The awful secrets of thy reign?
Yet pardon! if presumptuous thought,
With fear and admiration fraught,

perfumes, while a bottle of wine, stood cooling close by in a bed of frozen snow, at the melting of which, on the farther advance of summer, the beautiful and fragrant carpet was doubtless continued.

* When this Poem was written, no human foot had ever attained either of the summits of Mont Blanc; but, after many fruitless attempts, Mr. Bourrit relates, that a peasant of the valley of Chamouny has at length mounted on one of the lower domes; but the pure snows of the highest still remain inviolate.

Thy

Thy sacred solitudes affail,
 And turns, with trembling hand, aside,
 A little turns, the solemn veil
 By mighty Nature form'd, to hide
 The mysteries high of many a birth,
 That make the wonder or the pride
 Of weak, short-sighted man, on earth.
 Oh! what visions, fair as new,
 Break on my enchanted view!
 How describe, or where begin
 To paint the various glorious scene!
 Art, in vain thy mimic pow'r
 Palaces like these would raise!
 Thine—the pageants of an hour,
 These—the work of elder days,
 Which hoary ages, in their flight,
 With all that's noble, beautiful, bright,

F

Have

Have lov'd to deck! Thy outward face,
 Though rich with many a varied grace,
 With many a soft and splendid hue,
 And many a scene sublime and high,
 Vainly, oh Nature! to the view,
 Would offer marvels that might vie
 With those which in the bosom lie
 Of thy great delegate on earth!
 Here, various spars of brilliant birth,*
 Immeasurable caves adorn
 With garlands gay, and colours bright,
 Blending a thousand tints of light;
 And there, more radiant than the morn,
 The rubies blush, the diamonds blaze,
 And mingle their resplendent rays

* Mountains being considered as the source of the most precious mines, the Author thought it a fair poetical licence to suppose Mont Blanc their common centre, as well as to adorn their productions with all the tints and lustre due to the refiner and polisher.

With the mild sapphire's azure flame;
 While carbuncles, profusely spread,
 In precious fret-work o'er the head,
 With ruddy fires, refulgent, play,
 And pour down floods of light, that shame
 The paler splendors of the day.
 The shadowy tribe of opals here,
 With ever-changing clouds appear,
 Which catch, by turns, and graceful show,
 Each tint that colours Iris' bow;
 And there the golden topaz plays
 Through the high roofs with sunny rays.
 The lovely emerald's verdant pride
 Its lustre darts, on every side,
 Through many a sumptuous gallery's flight;
 And crystal cupolas are hung
 On pillars beaming with the fardine* bright,

* "And behold, a throne was set in heaven, and one sat on the throne; and he that sat was to
 "look upon like a jasper and a fardine stone."——Rev. iv. 2, 3.

With amethysts inwreath'd among,
 Glowing with all their hues of purple light.
 Its bleeding veins the jasper pours
 Through grotts, whose crystallizing stores
 Impearl their crimson; agates here,
 With lapis lazulis appear,
 And all the marble's motley host,
 In rare mosaics! that might scorn
 Whatever ancient Rome could boast,
 Or what doth modern Rome adorn.
 In halls of state, on either side,
 With rival wealth, and rival pride,
 The monarch gold displays his mines,
 And virgin silver radiant shines,
 Illumin'd by the phosphor's light,
 Which hangs around with magic art,
 Unnumber'd lamps; or flames apart
 Through long arcades, with many a meteor bright,

That

That o'er the subtil mercury play,
 Shooting their airy globes from far,
 More brilliant than the morning star,
 And swifter than the solar ray.
 But, vain! my fault'ring hand essays,
 Though but to name the countless stores
 Of sparkling gems, and precious ores,
 Which beggar the faint breath of praise,
 And deep in thy capacious breast
 Their several treasures form, and shine
 Each in its rich and native mine,
 From mortal's pride and avarice at rest:
 Yet sparing to their greedy hand
 Sufficient to corrupt their heart;
 And measuring out, to many a distant land,
 Through mazy ducts, unknown to human art,
 An earnest of the tides that flow
 At their sublime, but hidden source;

While

While myriads taste the rills that stream
 From realm to realm, nor ever dream
 Whence the seducing mischiefs grow,
 Nor backward learn to trace the lab'rinth of their course.

XVII.

Whence burst those torrents on my ear?
 Whence the new wonders that appear?
 O! give me strength to bear the sight!
 Soften the too severe delight!
 Left my oppress'd, my fainting soul,
 Too weak its feelings to controul,
 Sink underneath the scene sublime!
 Thy triumphs these, all pow'rful time,
 Whose wearing steps' incessant tread
 Have scoop'd out each miraculous bed
 Of mighty waters!* How they pour.

* It is now well known that the Glaciers are the sources of some of the greatest rivers in Europe, as well as innumerable small ones.

From countless channels! How their roar
 Confounds the sense! To seek the day,
 Flashing, and foaming on their way,
 How various tides in conflict join,
 Then, with united force, combine,
 The Glaciers frozen ribs to wear
 With ceaseless, as unnat'ral war;
 For due to them their liquid birth,
 Destin'd to fertilize the earth!
 How their boiling rage exhales
 On every side the misty veils,
 Which, whirling swift their humid volumes, rise
 As they would force a passage to the skies,
 But, blended with the watry stores
 The inexhausted Glacier pours
 From all his roofs, descend again, and flow,
 To mingle with their parent floods below.
 Wond'rous these! More wond'rous far

The

The frozen grots, the icy caves,
 Their surging sea tumultuous laves;
 Nor sparkling gem, nor beamy spar,
 Can with the various hues compare,
 Nor match the lustres that combine
 To grace their vaults, and live, and shine,
 From age to age, though melting still
 In many a pure translucent rill,
 Which, by the monarch still supplied,
 Still pay their tribute to the tide
 That roars beneath! With tow'ring state,
 Fast bound in icy chains by fate,
 A thousand figures known to earth,
 And like in substance as in birth,
 Rise bold, and beauteous to the sight,
 Here spring the azure columns bright,*

* This description of the icy caverns in the Glaciers will not be thought wholly imaginary, nor scarcely to exceed the truth, after having read, and confided in, the Dean of Bottens' account of the wonders and beauties of that he discovered in the Glacier of Kandel Steig.—See this relation, as transcribed by Monf. Bourrit.

There pyramids of lustre warm,
 Or fabrics fair, whose changeful form
 And changeful tints in contrast vie,
 To dazzle and enchant the eye.
 But who the thousand thousand forms shall tell,
 That deck the caverns, as by magic spell,
 And different far from all the moulds
 The outward world to vision holds,
 With colours brighter than the morn,
 The Glaciers' countless vaults adorn!
 Yet, rapt by potent Fancy, to my eyes,
 Their complicated glories rise;
 Through all their halls I swift am borne,
 See, at a glance, each copious urn,
 Catch all their pomps, and all their grace,
 And to their fire, MONT BLANC, their several wonders trace.

XVIII.

Great Monarch! who thy years shall tell?

Or who was present at the birth

Of thy majestic mother, Earth?

Who saw her when she blazing fell,

Swift and refulgent, from the sun,*

Ten thousand, thousand, fathoms down!

Then shoot oblique her flaming sphere

Through the immensity of space,

And, sparkling, run her glorious race

O'er æther's bright empyreal way,

Round her great fire, the source of day?

With her first revolving year

T' eternity, producing time,

And teaching 'gainst his stated prime,

* The author has here taken advantage of Buffon's system, which is very orthodox in the eye of poetry, whatever it may be in that of reason or religion.

His infant steps, assur'd to tread
 Where the gay moments sportive led,
 In fair, but undistinguish'd throng,
 The young and timid hours along.
 Who saw thee lift, sublime, thy head,
 Bare and rugged then thy brows,
 Uncover'd by their helm of snows,
 Above the world's yet burning sphere;
 And o'er the vast, the mingled mound,
 Of giant rocks and mountains round,
 With proud preeminence appear?
 Then nature to thy pow'rful hand,
 Well knowing its resistless force,
 Trusted her seasons' various course,
 And bow'd the forms to thy command;
 Bidding thy triple throne preside
 O'er every subject mountain's pride,

And from her sea, whose azure wave
 Doth Italy and Afric lave,
 To ocean, whose rough billows roar
 'Gainst Britain's free and glorious shore,
 Govern the nations, and pour down,
 From many a source, unthought of or unknown,
 Fierce tempests, or refreshing rain,
 To ravage, or revive the plain;
 Directing all the winds that blow,*
 And wise, dispensing good or ill,
 According to thy sov'reign will
 To bless or curse the sons of men below

XIX.

Behold thy great vicegerent there,
 Thy horn of terror, lift on high

* Mountains intercept the violent course of the winds, and, by resisting, break, and cause them to blow from different points; thus, converting into a saving and productive, what would otherwise prove merely a destructive, power. Their influence on the clouds and nether world is well known, so that without them there could neither be fruitfulness or life.

His dreadful points, with threatning air,*
 And pierce the azure vault of sky.
 Monstrous mounds of ice and snow
 Cover all his rocks below,
 And desolate and frozen plains,
 To Barrenness eternal prey,
 Where with deep silence, horror reigns,
 Between his summits stretch away
 In endless waste! The eagle's cry
 Through the dread scene is heard alone,
 Or avalanches, from on high,
 With sweeping ruin thund'ring down.
 This way, and that, a pond'rous chain
 Of rocks and mountains form his reign,

* As Mont Blanc is the monarch of the Savoy, so is the Schreck Horn (i. e. horn of terror) that of the Swiss Alps; and as these two sublime mountains are connected by their vassals, I thought it justifiable, in my personification of Mont Blanc, to consider the Schreck-Horn as his viceroy.

And

And frowning round on every side,
 Their glaciers tow'r, with monstrous pride,
 Lo! bursting from their endless fource,
 Four potent rivers bend their course
 Through different realms to different shores.
 The angry TESSIN rages down
 From rock to rock; the nobler RHONE
 A prouder current rapid pours;
 While here the RHINE, and there the Po,
 With more majestic volume flow,
 Swoll'n by a thousand tributary stores.
 Aloft the haughty SCHRECK-HORN stands,
 And all o'erlooks, and all commands:
 Inferior to thy state alone,
 And next in honour to thy throne,
 The potent regions of the North,
 Imperial mountain! by thy hand
 Were trusted to his guardian care:

Which,

Which, yet more liberal, dealt forth
A fairer lot to his command;
And is there one on earth more fair
Than to protect the fruitful plains,
Where Liberty with Science reigns?
Or up the steep climbs side by side
With rosy Health? Or roams along,
With jocund heart, and pastoral song,
From grove to grove, and brow to brow,
Or over summits white with snow,
Her herds, her flocks, her fields among,
Devoid of envy, fear, or pride;
Guarding within a troubled mind,
No secret thoughts, no cares confin'd,
Which guilt or falshood seek to hide?
Be this, HELVETIA, still thy boast!
Nor may the blessings e'er be lost,
Which virtue, join'd to valour, won!

Still

Still may thy wisdom turn aside
Corruption's foul and fatal tide,
And teach the nations round, a lesson all thy own!

XX.

Would'st thou, exalted mountain! tell
The scenes foregone in times of old,
What a tale couldst thou unfold!
Before our great forefather fell
Thou wert: Upon thy glorious head,
Doubtless, the Angels, downward sped,
With glitt'ring wings and shining vest,
To visit paradise, and guard
The blissful spot with heav'nly ward,
In radiant troops were wont to rest.
And there celestial strains were heard,
And heav'n in jubilee appear'd,
What time the great Creator's nod,

Bade man his own resemblance shine,
 And full upon his face divine
 Stamp'd the bright image of the God!
 Alas! how chang'd that spotless brow!
 By guilt and shame how sullied now!
 Yet, what it was, and shall become
 Through the dread medium of the tomb,
 Didst thou not lift thy head and see,
 The morn that heaven's high minstrelsy
 Hail'd with their harps the birth sublime
 Of Him, who, ere the rounds of time
 Th' Almighty will'd mankind should save,
 From worse than death, beyond the grave?
 And by his merits and his sufferings raise
 Their grov'ling hopes, and lift their wond'ring eyes
 To glories far eclipsing Paradise,
 And far surpassing all the notes of praise!

H

At

At that tremendous, matchless hour,
 When GOD INCARNATE died to free
 Mankind from endless misery,
 How did thy Avalanches pour
 Destruction round, and wild dismay!
 How fierce thy rapid Lightnings play!
 How deep thy awful Thunders roll
 From land to land, from pole to pole!
 How were thy Rocks asunder torn,
 And through the air their fragments borne!
 And how thy Glaciers to and fro,
 Didst thou, like a tempestuous sea,
 Convulse in fearful agony,
 And rend their monstrous ribs, and show
 Hell trembling in the abyss below!
 How through thyself with horror shake,
 And to thy deep foundations quake,

Earth

Earth shrinking from her solid sphere,
 And sharing in thy sacred fear!
 Before the waters in an heap
 Were gather'd up, and fill'd the deep,
 Thou wert:—And ere from Nature's face,
 They rush'd to their appointed place,
 With regal state thy lofty head
 Transcended their tumultuous bed;
 And, fearless, brav'd their raging pride,
 And all their mining art defied.
 Nay; when, more terrible, the Main
 Rose, boiling, from his gulphs again,
 Proud of his Maker's dread command
 To overwhelm the guilty land,
 And meet the torrents pour'd on high
 From every window of the sky,
 Still, o'er the wreck of nature round,
 In universal deluge drown'd,

Thy throne its gloomy splendor rear'd,
 And with unshaken state appear'd:*
 While, breaking earth's dark shroud between,
 Th' exterminating angel's form,
 With baleful beauty bright, was seen,
 Commanding on thy domes the storm.
 And when, once more, earth's changing sphere
 In conflagration shall appear,
 And Nature and her works expire
 In one tremendous flood of fire,
 Thou, haply, shalt survive the general doom,
 Rise like the Phoenix from thy flaming tomb,
 And be the wonder of a world to come!†

* It is the opinion of the celebrated Monsieur De SAUSSURE, and others of the best Naturalists, who have minutely investigated the matter, that the universal flood, though rising far above every habitable region, never reached the highest summits of the Alps, where each stratum of rock is of a different nature, and differently disposed from those lower down; these latter ones also retain, in their fossils, marks of the flood, which the loftiest eminences never exhibit.



† The admirable Philosopher and exemplary Christian, Mons^r. BONNET, supposes that this globe has undergone various changes, before its actual state of existence, and that it will probably undergo many others in the endless revolutions of eternity; he consequently thinks, that the term Creation, as applied to it in the book of GENESIS, should be understood in a partial and confined sense, as rather expressive of its form, properties, and inhabitants, when issuing from the destruction and chaos of its pre-existing state, than from its being then first called into existence.

N. B. When the LAST sheet of this Poem was printing, the Author met with an account of Monsieur DE SAUSSURE's late expedition to MONT BLANC, in which he attained, and rested some hours on its highest summit.

T H E E N D.

